



University of
Connecticut

October 2005

Women's
Center

Voices

Real WOMEN
Real CONNECTIONS
Real COMMUNITY



Due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback from last May's annual Women's Advance conference, we have decided to continue the theme of the conference, **Real Women, Real Connections, Real Community**, into the programming for the 2005-2006 academic year. (For a herstory of the Women's Advance Conference, please visit our website.) Thirteen years after the first conference, we found that we are still confronted with the need to reconnect to strengthen the sense of community among women and with negotiating the changes that are transforming UConn into a top choice, not only for students, but for staff and faculty as well.

Through our programming this year, we hope to continue the vision of last year's Planning Committee – to create a forum for UConn women, across the range of positions, departments, and disciplines, to come together for professional development and networking and to enhance

the workplace climate and to support the personal and professional growth of women staff and faculty. We believe that there is much value in coming together, talking across our differences, celebrating our similarities, and creating support networks. We also believe when we are supporting each other and working together, that we are creating benefits for all. Our ultimate hope is that by creating steps towards advancement and by providing guidance both ahead and behind, we can create a structure that lifts us all. For opportunities to continue this dialogue, please see *Among Women* and the *Support Staff Brown Bag Lunch* on page 2.

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25 Years and Looking Forward, One Heart and Mind at a Time

By Betsy Cracco, VAWPP Coordinator

As many of you who are friends of the Women's Center know, the Violence Against Women Prevention Program (VAWPP) was created in 1980, and originally named the Rape Education Program, after students on campus organized in response to a violent rape here at UConn. It is an honor for me to join this effort that has changed so many lives as it marks its 25th year. Already, in my short tenure of 4 weeks, I have been deeply touched by the commitment of the students to envision a world that is less violent, more loving, and more just. Their willingness to talk about and educate others about these difficult issues serves as a testimony to our fore-sisters and brothers who were brave enough to shepherd this issue out of silence, and to tell their stories.

That being said, perhaps I can share something about my own background, and the way that the power of individual stories has led me to this work. By training I am a psychologist, and have spent the last 20 years working in higher education – beginning in residence life, and within the last ten years working in college mental health. From my first college course in social justice, it struck me that more than being about “unfairness,” injustice was, and is, about people's pain. And so, I naturally became oriented to feminist therapy, where the personal and political are

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New Student Staff Members

With the graduation of a number of student staff last year, the Women's Center is excited to introduce a number of new folks on our staff. **Ji-Sung Woo**, Computer Specialist, is a graduate student in Computer Science and Engineering and chose to work here because she wanted to use her abilities to help the Women's Center. **Veronica Peña** is a 7th semester Political Science major and is working on some women's leadership initiatives. She transferred to Storrs this semester from the Greater Hartford Regional Campus. She decided to work at the Women's Center because she wanted to work with other people who feel as passionate as she does on certain issues. This is also her first semester at the Center, and she finds the people here are very welcoming and helpful and feels it's a great environment to work in. **Marybeth Fafalla** is in her 3rd semester at UConn and is assisting with the ongoing project of the organization, research and compilation of much of the 33 year "herstory" of the Women's Center. **Lisa Li** is a first year, Pre-Pharmacy major and works with us as a clerical assistant. She chose to work at the Women's Center because she had work study and thought, "What better way to find myself as an individual than to work at the Women's Center?" **Sarah Fennessy** is the facilitator of the Between

Women group. She is a 5th semester, Special Education major and was motivated to participate in the Center because she really believes in what the Center stands for and hopes to be able to expand the group. **Greta Kenney** was involved with the Women's Center prior to joining the staff this year. She was trained, through Women's Studies 271 & 272, as a peer educator to facilitate violence against women prevention workshops and participated in this past year's *Vagina Monologues*. She is an 8th semester Sociology major and works as a VAWPP Assistant. "I loved working with VAWPP last year; I just had to come back!" **Christina Maryland's** work at the Center focuses on the advertising/PR side of things. She is looking for new, inventive and cost effective ways to get "the buzz" going on the Women's Center and promoting our events. Christina is a 7th semester Communications/Political Science major. **Ashley Oropal** is a first year, Computer Science and Engineering major and is the Statistician at the Center. She chose to work at the Center because she "wanted to be a part of something that was more than just a job." **Maame Sampong** is a 3rd year, Healthcare Management major. She joined the Women's Center because "I think I can give a different cultural and societal view on women's issues since I am from Africa and have been living there for the past 20 years." She plans to use her education back home to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Support Staff Brown Bag Lunch

As a continuation of conversations begun at the Women's Advance Conference in May, this group is an effort to bring support staff together. The Advance Conference was a forum for UConn women to come together for professional development and networking, with the goal of enhancing the workplace climate and to support the personal and professional growth of women. Based on feedback from support staff who attended the Conference, of wanting to continue these efforts, this group is being formed to provide networking opportunities and to share common concerns and challenges. The first meeting was held on September 27th. The group plans to come up with specific activities for the year, which could include bringing in guest speakers, participating in professional development workshops, viewing videos, etc. Please join us and bring your ideas and your lunch - drinks and dessert will be provided.

(**Note:** You did not have to attend the conference to participate in this group.)

For questions, please contact Carol Millette (6-4738) or June Foran (6-2315). Meeting Dates through the end of the year are at the Women's Center Lounge:

October 27 – noon to 1 pm

December 2 – noon to 2 pm (Guest Speaker)

And...

Among Women



Participants in the annual Women's Advance Conference overwhelmingly gave us the feedback that they wanted more! In response to this, we are hosting a monthly opportunity to network and facilitate community building among women across disciplines, divisions and experiences at UConn. Discussion topics will be identified by the participants and will include dialogues about strategies for support and change. Bring your lunch and we will provide drinks and dessert. Facilitated by Kathy Fluckiger, Women's Center and Barbara Gurr, Women's Studies.

(**Note:** You did not have to attend the conference to participate in this group.)

For questions, please contact Kathy Fluckiger at 486-4738. This group meets at noon on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at the Women's Center Lounge.

Fall Calendar Highlights

October Domestic Violence Awareness Month

- 25th Creating Real Community – Who Are We? Part 2 of a 3 part series**
 How do you relate to other people and situations? All things, including you, are made up of energy. This energy is exchanged during our interactions with others. Through meditation, discussion, and play, we will learn how to acknowledge and feel this energy, to retrieve the parts of ourselves that we have given away to others, and how to develop healthy boundaries.
 Tuesday, 6 pm, Women's Center Lounge
- 26th Arte Sana: Corazon Lastimado: Healing the Wounded Heart: An Evening of Healing**
Healing the Wounded Heart offers visual testimony to the impact of sexual violence in peoples' lives by offering survivors, and those who work with or love them, wooden hearts to use as vehicles of expression and healing. Under the facilitation of Amy Johnson, a bi-lingual, expressive art therapist specializing in sexual violence, students are invited to come and create their own hearts. Refreshments will be served. Co-sponsored with PR/LACC.
 Wednesday, 7 pm, Puerto Rican/Latin American Cultural Center Common Room
- 27th National Young Women's Day of Action**
 National Young Women's Day of Action is a call for women to unite in solidarity, across movements, to feel our power and secure our freedom. For eleven years, young women across the country have organized around issues of reproductive and sexual freedom, racial and economic justice, and to end violence against women. Activities will take place all around campus throughout the day. Check the Women's Center website at www.womenscenter.uconn.edu for updated information.
- 27th Thursday Night at the Movies – Real Women Have Curves**
 This is the story of Ana, a first generation, Mexican-American teenager on the verge of becoming a woman. *Real Women Have Curves* features a group rarely portrayed in mass media: complex, deeply human, hard-working Latina women shown with love, humor, and pride that defies stereotypes and common misrepresentations. The film is based on the play by Josefina Lopez, which is based on her own experience. Discussion immediately following.
 Thursday, 6 pm, Women's Center Lounge

November

- 15th Growing Up Southern: White Men I Met Along the Way with Joyce King**
 Joyce King is an award-winning anchor and reporter, and has worn many broadcasting hats, including talk show host, producer and writer. She was the only journalist to cover all three trials in the James Byrd truck-dragging death and she wrote the book called *HATE CRIME: The Story of a Dragging Death in Jasper, Texas*. Her latest memoir, *Growing Up Southern – White Men I Met Along the Way* is a limited edition title which will be available for the book signing following her presentation. Co-sponsored with the Center for Academic Programs, the African American Studies Institute and the African American Cultural Center.
 Tuesday, 4 pm, Konover Auditorium, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center
- 29th Creating Real Community – Where is Our Community? Part 3 of a 3 part series**
 Community is inside of each and every one of us. By working on ourselves, developing healthy boundaries, and paying attention to the needs of those around us, we are helping to make a healthy, nurturing community. Through meditation we will experience how our own personal community affects our community as a whole. We will use the skills we have discovered to help find our true selves, to develop a sense of community.
 Tuesday, 6 pm, Women's Center Lounge
- 30th State of Denial - Film Screening with Director Elaine Epstein**
 Some of the most powerful and memorable images of the past century have been brought to the world's attention through film. This film shows that the obstacles of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in South Africa are similar to obstacles faced everywhere, but compounded by a history of conflict, massive poverty and inequalities. Film director Elaine Epstein will introduce the film and answer questions when the screening is finished.
 Co-sponsored with Health Education, Student Health Services.
 Wednesday, 7 pm, Student Union Theater

Group Offerings

At the Women's Center...

Graduate Women's Group

"Equality," "feminism," and "diversity" have become so ingrained into our society's rhetoric that we may be tempted to raise the question: does gender even matter anymore? However, when Harvard President Larry Summers suggested at an academic conference last January that the lack of women in the top positions of math and science fields might stem from innate differences in women's aptitude for these fields, we women in academia received a grim reminder that we are still living, working, and learning in a world where gender does matter. Therefore, as we are working towards our advanced degrees, it is important to pause for intervals in our busy lives to reflect on the common concerns we have not only as graduate students, but as female graduate students in a world where the gender question does not seem likely to magically disappear. We owe it to ourselves, as women aspiring to enter the top levels of highly competitive fields, to continue to organize and discuss the ways in which we see gender in the classroom and beyond. The graduate women's group is an opportunity to convene with other women on the long and often arduous academic journey, so that we may celebrate how far we have all been and get a clearer picture of where we are going. The Graduate Women's Group will provide a forum for you and other female graduate students at UConn to...

- Get to know female graduate students outside your department, and exchange the types of coursework and projects you're working on
- Discuss stress management
- Share experiences and advice on dealing with discrimination in both the classroom and the workforce
...And much more!

Between Women

A discussion group for women who love women... or think they might. Come and discuss fun topics, movies and more with women who share your feelings and experiences. Meets every Wednesday at the Women's Center. For more information, please email betweenwomen@hotmail.com.
Wednesdays, 7 pm at the Women's Center.

Women's Book Club

Got books? The Women's Book Club is looking for new members. Come and explore the world through the eyes and words of women. Visit the "Groups" section of our website to review past selections. We meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

All of the meetings will be held at noon in the Women's Center Lounge.



Sexual Assault Survivor's Group

A support group for women who have experienced actual or attempted sexual assault at any time in their lives. Co-sponsored with Mental Health Services. **Contact Betsy Cracco at 486-4738 or Jenn Fox at 486-4705 for more information.**



Also on campus...

Sista || Sista

Sisters come together to share and learn from each other's experiences and interpretations of college life through fun activities and discussions.

Mondays at 6:30 pm in the AACC Lounge

As. A. Shero

Asian American Shero (As. A. Shero) is a student-initiated program focusing on the educational awareness, equality and empowerment of today's Asian American Women. Discussions and workshops are planned on a monthly basis and include topics such as sexism, sexual orientation, health, career opportunities, racism and cultural expectations. Whether an active participant or an ally, As. A. Shero invites one and all to work toward the empowerment of Asian American Women.

For more information, contact Nkaozer Yang and Hana Kim at sheroic@gmail.com.



The UConn Chapter of National Organization for Women (NOW) is seeking reliable, dedicated self-starters to work together to actively promote awareness and understanding of issues that affect ALL women and strive to create a future in which sexism and oppression no longer exist. If you would like to find out more, come to a meeting or email huskynow@yahoo.com.

Meetings are every Monday at 6 pm in the Student Union Room 416A.

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intrinsically linked. Along the way, I spent plenty of time working for and with survivors – both training crisis center staff and serving as an advocate. It has been a privilege to witness and help facilitate the healing of so many strong women and men. My transition to prevention work has been a natural outgrowth of this intervention work. If one bears heart-rending witness to so many problems, how can one help but to try to be part of the solution?

That brings me to one of the themes for this year's VAWPP program. That is – “Are you part of the solution?” Our theory is that there are many “closet allies” in the UConn community. Moreover, upon closer examination, we would like to highlight for the UConn community that gendered violence is not the issue of a vocal minority, but rather touches most students, very personally. We have begun presenting students with a list of ways that they may have experienced this intersection of gender and violence. For example, for men, we invite discussions surrounding the ways that violence has been used against them as a tool of socializing masculinity. For women, we continue to explore their experiences of sexual violation, beginning with verbal and physical sexual harassment in grade school. Thus far, an overwhelming majority (100% in the class I facilitated this morning) of students endorse a personal experience of gendered violence. We hope this personal connection to the issue serves as a platform for involvement. In essence, the mission of the VAWPP program is to educate students to action!

This Fall a small group of dedicated VAWPP peer educators, with the help of our dedicated VAWPP Assistant, Jessica Morneault, are conducting over 40 workshops, related to violence against women, in classrooms and residence halls. October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and we have assembled a host of programs for the campus. The Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW) program is focused on recruitment, and will show the film, “Tough Guise: Violence, Media and the Crisis in Masculinity” as their kick-off event on October 19th in the Student Union Theater. We continue the traditions of the *Clothesline Project* and *Thursdays in Black* under the leadership of our veteran VAWPP Specialists, Hilary Jones and Greta Kenney. In addition, the VAWPP program has initiated some exciting collaborations with other cultural centers. Most notably, we will hold “Arte Sana – An Evening of Healing” with the Puerto Rican and Latin American Cultural Center. This will be an expressive workshop facilitated by a professional art therapist specializing in working on issues of domestic violence within the Latina/o community. We are also thrilled to connect with the African American Cultural Center's groups, *Brother to Brother* and *Sista II Sista* in an on-going dialog about the intersections of race, gender and violence.

We invite you to join us in making these issues visible and verbal across the UConn campus. We have some amazing plans for the Spring semester, and call YOU to be a part of the solution. The VAWPP and MAVAW programs are constantly looking for dedicated women and men to work along side our other peer educators to bring about change. If you are interested, please contact Betsy Cracco at the Women's Center. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all of the dedicated individuals who, over the past 25 years, have continued to hope for, and work for, a less violent community. We continue their vision with a great sense of responsibility and pride.



Reminders...

Join Our Listserv!

Want to keep up with the Women's Center on a weekly basis? Then join the UWOMEN-L Listserv, a weekly updated email featuring Women's Center events, on and off campus events, announcements and local, national, and international news. To sign up, go to vm.uconn.edu/subunsub.html and enter UWOMEN-L. ♀

Check Out Our Website:

Visit our regularly updated website at: www.womenscenter.uconn.edu. You can find a complete list of events for the semester, learn about all of our ongoing groups, and get informed on issues such as dating violence and sexual assault. You can also find out what kind of resources we keep in our library. Past newsletters are also posted. ♀

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Voices

Where all the pieces come together